1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

163 average age of the mother at first conception can be estimated to be about sixteen, the range being reported from thirteen to nineteen. The father is generally about five years older than the mother. Considering the existing families with more than one child, we found that families had from two to six living and one or two deceased children. It must be realized, however, that these are not yet completed families and will produce further children. No difference in fertility could be noticed between women married to white men or Indians.

164 The Kaska are not a healthy people. The most common illnesses noted during the period of field work were tuberculosis, poor teeth, influenza, dysentery, colds, skin diseases, such as impetigo, and red eyes. A few cases of gonorrhea were treated by the army physicians. No undue frequency of accidents was noted. The only serious one during the fall of 1945 in the Upper Laird tribe was the case of an elderly man who fell while intoxicated and sprained his back.

Children tend to have particularly bad teeth. Two children, aged three, had lost the two upper middle incisors and several children showed extremely bad tooth decay. Influenza epidemics occur occasionally and in the fall of 1944 a dysentery epidemic spread from the town of Lower Post up and down the Liard River. At Smith River five Nelson Indian children were reported to have lost their lives from this disease and an upper Liard Indian woman and child also died. Sporadic outbreaks of dysentery continued during the

●165 the summer of 1945. Eleven deaths occurred in the period from September 1944 through August 1945. This indicates a death rate of at least 55 per 1000, equalling the birth rate. Of these deaths seven were of children, one a newborn baby.

HISTORY

173 According to the Old Man, an Upper Liard informant, the Kaska Indians of that region believe themselves to be descendants from the Tlingit through the Ross River (Pelly) Indians. The progenitors of the present day Liard River Kaska originally moved south to explore the Upper Liard country and remained there. It seems worthwhile to consider this bit of traditional history. Pelly and Ross Rivers mark the headwaters of the great Yukon drainage system and their confluence represents a point which would be relatively easy to reach by moving up the waterways from Bering Sea. From the head of the Pelly River, migrants could continue toward the interior by crossing the Pelly River-Frances Lake divide, thus striking the Liard River drainage system. Once across this barrier the vast stretch of intermontane basin lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Cordillera would lie open. If such a theory of migration into the intermontane basin is to be sustained, the cultures of the tribes extending from the Yukon River would have to show a reasonable

[170] degree of similarity. Although evidence is still lacking for the groups north of Frances Lake (for example, the Pelly River Indians), similarity is found between the Kaska (but excluding the Nelson River tribe), Tahltan, and Carrier. Masks, potlatching, line dancing instead of circle dancing, and dual organizations are some of the traits common to Alaskan and the Athapaskan tribes of west-central British Columbia but lacking among the more easterly Slave and Sekani groups.

The above migration theory would deny the derivation of the diagnostic traits from the Northwest Coast, although the subsequent development of such traits may have been

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

685 Sanctions invoked to enforce property conceptions failed to be made explicit by informants. Probably they included the application of individual force, expressed verbally or physically, with the consent of the community. That is to say, if a man could not claim that to which he felt a right he might seize the goods and in the process perhaps inflict punishment on his rival. Property offenses also earned offenders an unfavorable public opinion. No force was used to compel a person to share meat but "We had a cache too. We could do the same thing. We won't give him much." Reciprocity therefore constituted one device serving to maintain the pattern of food sharing.

681 The aboriginal community found itself compelled to deal with lying, assault, manslaughter, infanticide, murder, cannibalism, sorcery, incest, unwed motherhood, [577] adultery, and treason. A common form of lying consisted of a person returning from a hunt and telling exaggerated stories of the amount of game that he had seen. Not many such accounts were needed before the liar found himself regularly disbelieved. Against slander a quick tempered man reacted by killing his calumniator. Injuries inflicted due [672] to assault were settled by payment, a distinction apparently being made between wounds deliberately inflicted and those resulting accidentally. At least, no payment followed in the case of hurts secured from children's play. Likewise the people distinguished manslaughter from murder. In event of the former no vengeance followed but a payment, considerably lower than that obtaining in the case of murder, was expected. An Indian who committed manslaughter might be adopted in place of the deceased.[50]

847 People would drive out of the community a woman whose neglect caused her child to starve. "Let her starve," the people said in the hope that other people would thereby learn the necessity of treating each other more kindly. Infanticide of either a girl or boy infant merited severe scolding. The temptation to kill a baby appears to have been limited to cases where offspring resulted from incestuous unions. Such a child was sometimes killed in the birth camp, the mother stuffing its mouth with moss. The informant recalled no instance of abortion but he thought the deed would have been classified as murder.

682 Murder might be settled through a large payment, made in installments running over a year or more, or by blood revenge. Weregild required the cooperation of all the members of the murderer's family. Vengeance constituted the duty of the victim's brother or uncle (father's brother?) and was never undertaken by a father. Retaliatory action always went against the actual killer, and not against members of his family.[51] It is not

[50] Among the Tlingit "any crime may be paid for on a money basis." (Jones, *Study of the Tlingits of Alaska* [1914], 193.) Weregild is stated to follow in restitution for murder and manslaughter among certain Kwakiutl tribes, the Tsimshian, Haida, and Tlingit Chilkat. Drucker, *Culture Element Distributions: XXVI, Northwest Coast* (1950), 221.

[51] "The original Indians claiming the country of the Upper Pelly and its tributaries have completely disappeared with the exception of one old woman. . . . The main causes for this is quarreling amongst themselves. . . . generally started by two men fighting and one killing the other, when the relations and friends would take the quarrel up and kill the first man or some of his relatives to get even and so they would keep the quarrel going until one party were all dead or so weakened that for a time they were satisfied to stop. Secondly, by stronger tribes making raids on them and killing the men and taking their women away with them . . . ." Field, *Unpublished manuscript* (1913), 1.

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